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United States Standards for Grades of Christmas Trees

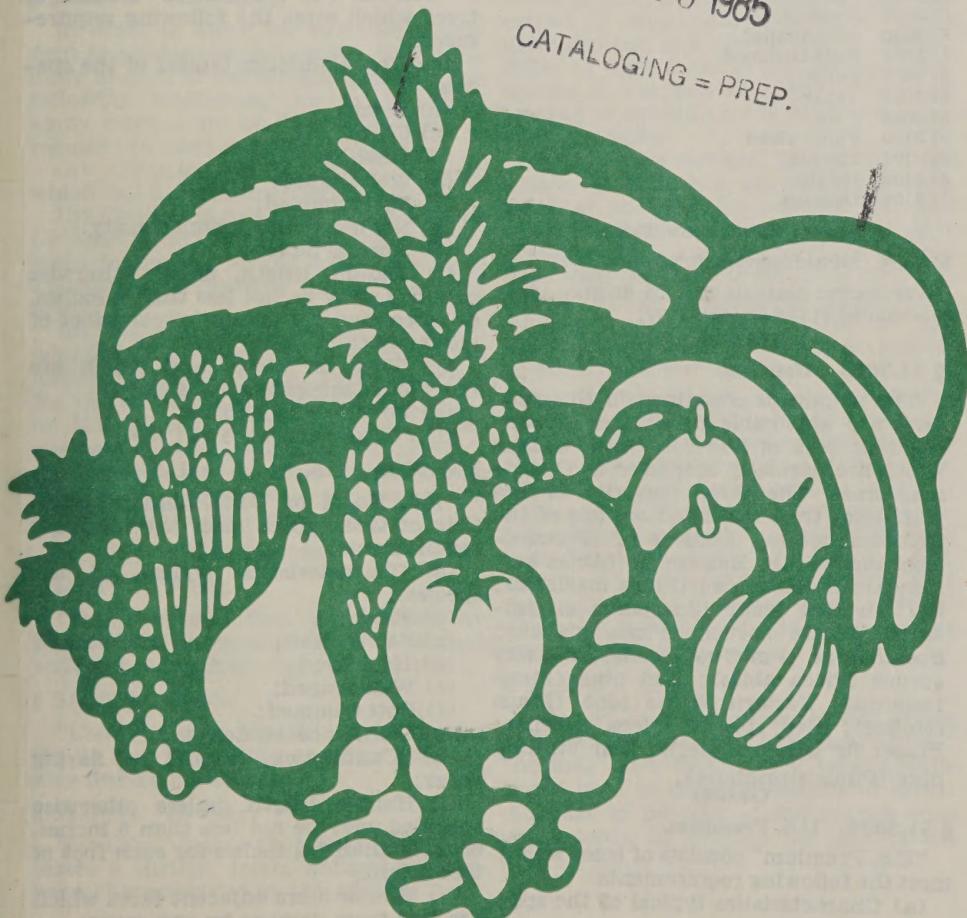
Revised, Effective April 1, 1973

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UNITED STATES STANDARDS FOR GRADES OF CHRISTMAS TREES

SOURCE: 38 FR 5252, Feb. 27, 1973, unless otherwise noted. Redesignated at 42 FR 32514, June 27, 1977 and at 46 FR 63203, Dec. 31, 1981.

Effective April 1, 1973

GENERAL

Sec. 51.3085 General.

GRADES

51.3086 U.S. Premium.
51.3087 U.S. No. 1 or U.S. Choice.
51.3088 U.S. No. 2 or U.S. Standard.

CULLS

51.3089 Culls.

SIZE

51.3090 Size.

TOLERANCES

51.3091 Tolerances.

DEFINITIONS

51.3092 Fresh.
51.3093 Clean.
51.3094 Healthy.
51.3095 Well shaped.
51.3096 Butt trimmed.
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51.3100 Fairly clean.
51.3101 Handle.
51.3102 Height.
51.3103 Damage.

METRIC CONVERSION TABLE

51.3104 Metric conversion table.

AUTHORITY: Sections 203-205, 60 Stat. 1087, as amended (7 U.S.C. 1621-1627).

GENERAL

§ 51.3085 General.

The standards contained in this subpart are applicable to sheared or un-sheared trees of the coniferous species which are normally marketed as Christmas trees. The large majority of the Christmas trees marketed are one of the following species: Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*); Balsam fir (*Abies balsamea*); Black spruce (*Picea mariana*); Eastern Red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*); White spruce (*Picea glauca*); Scotch pine (*Pinus sylvestris*); Norway spruce (*Picea abies*); Red pine (*Pinus resinosa*); Eastern White pine (*Pinus strobus*); Red spruce (*Picea rubens*); Fraser fir (*Abies fraseri*); and Virginia pine (*Pinus virginiana*).

GRADES

§ 51.3086 U.S. Premium.

"U.S. Premium" consists of trees which meet the following requirements:

(a) Characteristics typical of the species;

- (b) Fresh;
- (c) Clean;
- (d) Healthy;
- (e) Well shaped;
- (f) Butt trimmed;
- (g) Not less than medium density;
- (h) Normal taper;
- (i) Handle length, unless otherwise specified, may be not less than 6 inches, or more than 1 3/4 inches for each foot of tree height;
- (j) Four faces which are free from damage by any cause;
- (k) For size see § 51.3090;
- (l) For tolerances see § 51.3091.

§ 51.3087 U.S. No. 1 or U.S. Choice.

"U.S. No. 1 or U.S. Choice" consists of trees which meet the following requirements:

(a) Characteristics typical of the species;

- (b) Fresh;
- (c) Clean;
- (d) Healthy;
- (e) Well shaped;
- (f) Butt trimmed;
- (g) Not less than medium density;
- (h) Normal taper;

(i) Handle length, unless otherwise specified, may be not less than 6 inches, or more than 1 3/4 inches for each foot of tree height;

(j) Three or more faces which are free from damage by any cause;

- (k) For size see § 51.3090;
- (l) For tolerances see § 51.3091.

§ 51.3088 U.S. No. 2 or U.S. Standard.

"U.S. No. 2 or U.S. Standard" consists of trees which meet the following requirements:

(a) Characteristics typical of the species;

- (b) Fresh;
- (c) Fairly clean;
- (d) Healthy;
- (e) Well shaped;
- (f) Butt trimmed;
- (g) Light or better density;
- (h) Candlestick, normal or flaring taper;

(i) Handle length, unless otherwise specified, may be not less than 6 inches, or more than 1 3/4 inches for each foot of tree height;

(j) Two or more adjacent faces which are free from damage by any cause;

- (k) For size see § 51.3090;
- (l) For tolerances see § 51.3091.

CULLS

§ 51.3089 Culls.

"Culls" consist of individual trees which fail to meet the requirements of the U.S. No. 2 or U.S. Standard Grade.

SIZE

§ 51.3090 Size.

Size of trees shall be stated in terms of height in foot or half-foot steps, and unless otherwise specified, the following color codes may be used to designate the respective sizes:

	Feet
Purple tag	4 to 5
Blue tag	4 to 5½
Yellow tag	5 to 6
Red tag	5½ to 7
Orange tag	6 to 7
Green tag	7 to 8
White tag	8 to 10

TOLERANCES

§ 51.3091 Tolerances.

In order to allow for variations incident to proper sizing, grading, and handling in each of the foregoing grades the following tolerances, by count, shall apply when a lot of Christmas trees is required to meet a specified grade.

(a) *Off-size*. Ten percent for trees which fail to meet the height specified.

(b) *Off-length handle*. Twenty percent for trees which fail to meet the requirement for handle length but which meet all other requirements for the specified grade.

(c) *Defects*. Ten percent for trees which fail to meet the remaining requirements of the grade: *Provided*, That for the U.S. Premium and the U.S. No. 1 or U.S. Choice grades not more than one-half of this amount, or 5 percent, shall be allowed for trees which fail to meet the requirements of the next grade lower than that specified.

DEFINITIONS

§ 51.3092 Fresh.

"Fresh" means that the needles are pliable and generally firmly attached with not more than slight shattering.

§ 51.3093 Clean.

"Clean" means that the tree is practically free from vines or other undesirable foreign material.

§ 51.3094 Healthy.

"Healthy" means that the foliage possesses a thrifty, fresh, natural appearance characteristic of the species.

§ 51.3095 Well shaped.

"Well shaped" means that the tree is not flat on one side and the branches of the tree, whether sheared or unsheared, are of sufficient number and length to form a circular outline tapering from the lowest whorl of branches to the top.

§ 51.3096 Butt trimmed.

"Butt trimmed" means that all barren branches below the first whorl of foliated branches shall have been removed, and the butt of the trunk has been smoothly cut at approximately right angles to the trunk.

§ 51.3097 Density.

"Density" means the amount of foliage present. Factors contributing to the degree of density are: The number and size of branches within the whorl, distance between whorls, number and arrangement of branchlets on each branch, the extent of internodal branching, needle arrangement, and needle length. Species differ in their habit of growth and some species do not have internodal branches. Density is judged on the basis of species characteristics.

(a) *Medium density*. Means that the whorls or branches are relatively close together, the branchlets or side branches are fairly numerous and the needle population is adequate to cover the branches. The stem may be visible, but not distinctly visible throughout most of its length. To grade U.S. Premium or U.S. No. 1 or U.S. Choice trees must possess at least "medium density."

(b) *Light density*. Means that the whorls or branches may be thinly spaced, the branchlets or side branches may be only reasonably numerous, but the needle population must be adequate to reasonably cover the branches. The stem is usually visible for approximately 70 percent of its length. To grade U.S. No. 2 or U.S. Standard trees must have at least "light density." Trees that are more open or which do not meet the requirements of "light density" are culls.

§ 51.3098 Taper.

"Taper" means the relationship of the width of the tree to its height. "Flaring," "normal," and "candlestick" taper are the terms used to describe degrees of taper. At least 75 percent of the branch ends must touch or overlap the line of the cone.

(a) Flaring taper means that the general shape of the tree, judged from its best side, forms a cone the base of which is more than 90 percent of its height.

(b) Normal taper means that the general shape of the tree, judged from its best side, forms a cone the base of which is from 40 to 90 percent of its height.

(c) Candlestick taper means that the general shape of the tree, judged from its best side, forms a cone the base of which is less than 40 percent of its height.

§ 51.3099 Face.

"Face" means the visible surface area of a tree as viewed from a distance of 8 to 10 feet from the tree. A tree shall be considered as having four faces, each consisting of one-quarter of the surface area of the tree.

§ 51.3100 Fairly clean.

"Fairly clean" means that the tree is moderately free from vines or other undesirable foreign material.

§ 51.3101 Handle.

"Handle" means that portion of the trunk between the butt or base of a tree and the lowest complete whorl of foliated branches.

§ 51.3102 Height.

"Height" means the distance from the base of the trunk to the top of the main leader, excluding that portion of the leader which extends more than 4 inches above the apex of the cone of the taper applicable to the tree. (See § 51.3098).

§ 51.3103 Damage.

"Damage" means any specific noticeable defect described, or listed in this section, or an equally objectionable variation of any one of these defects, any other defect, or any combination of defects which materially detracts from the appearance or marketing quality of the Christmas tree.

(a) The following are noticeable defects which generally affect one or more faces and are usually readily observed by casual observation of a tree:

(1) Decided gap (abnormal space between whorls of branches).

(2) Unduly long branches.

(3) Uneven density.

(4) Weak branches.

(5) Broken branches.

(6) Barren lower whorl (no needles on branches of bottom whorl).

(7) Curved stems.

(8) Hole in tree (lack of branches or foliage and appears as an opening of considerable size).

(9) Excessively long main leader (when the main leader or stem above top whorl of branches is not proportionate to the overall tree height).

(10) Incomplete whorl of branches.

(11) Handle not proportionate to height of tree.

(b) The following are defects which individually or in combination with other defects may materially detract from the appearance or marketing quality of a tree to the same degree as the noticeable defects listed above.

(1) Multiple leaders.

(2) Crow's-nest (cluster of short branches which forms a compact nest-type whorl arrangement).

(3) Multiple main stems.

(4) Gooseneck (greater than usual distance between two whorls of branches).

(5) Noticeable presence of galls on the branches.

(6) Abnormal loss of needles.

(7) Abnormal curling of needles.

(8) Noticeable presence of dead twigs.

(9) Vines.

(10) Foreign material.

METRIC CONVERSION TABLE

§ 51.3104 Metric conversion table.

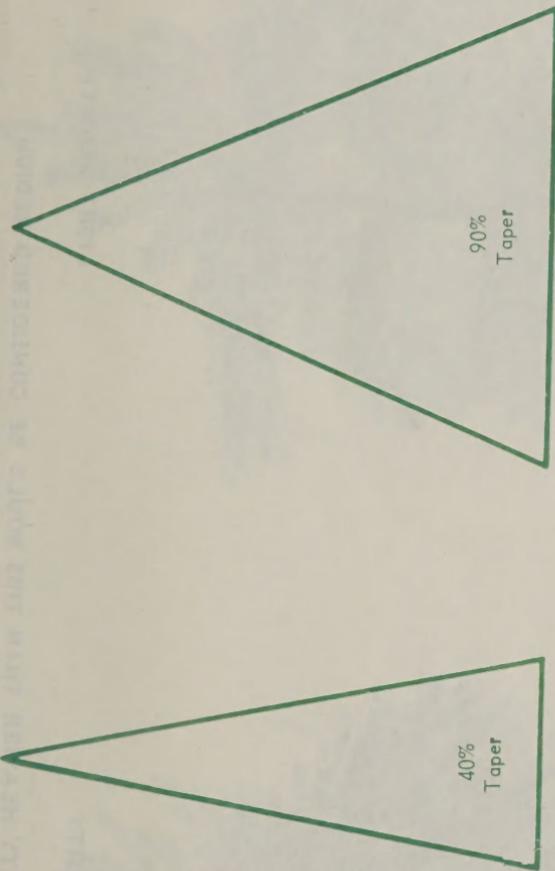
Feet (cm)	Centi-meters	Feet (cm)	Centi-meters
½ = 15.24	6 = 182.88		
1 = 30.48	7 = 213.36		
2 = 60.96	8 = 243.84		
3 = 91.44	9 = 274.32		
4 = 121.92	10 = 304.80		
5 = 152.40			

These standards shall become effective on April 1, 1973, and will thereupon supersede the U.S. Standards for Grades of Christmas Trees which have been in effect since June 15, 1962 (7 CFR 51.3085-51.3104).

Dated: February 22, 1973.

E. L. PETERSON,
Administrator,
Agricultural Marketing Service.

[FRC Doc.73-3620 Filed 2-26-73; 8:45 am]



less than 40% Candlestick

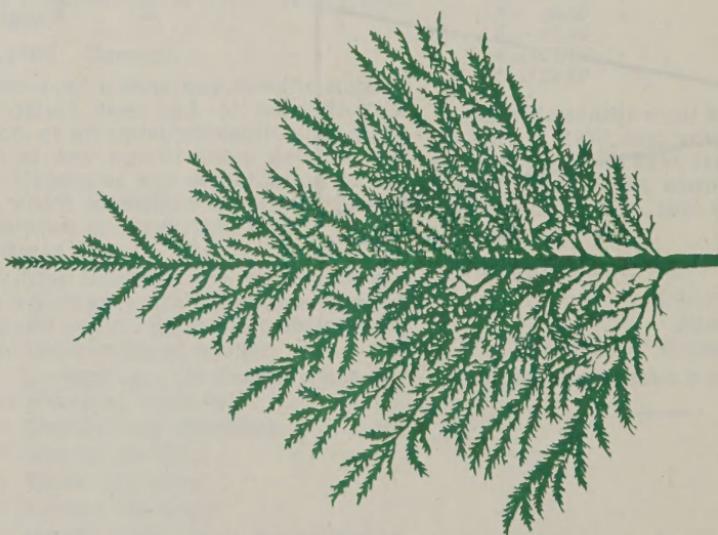
40 - 90% Normal

more than 90% Flaring

CHRISTMAS TREE TAPER



LIGHT DENSITY



LIGHT DENSITY

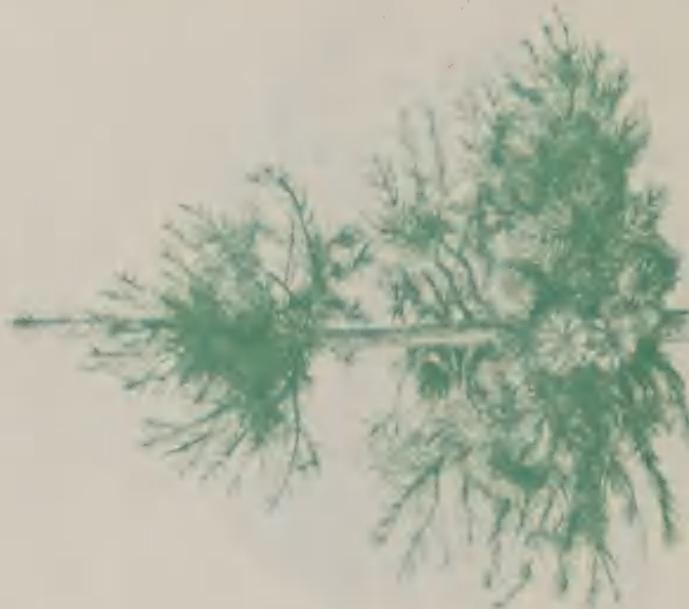
DENSITY HEAVIER THAN THIS WOULD BE CONSIDERED MEDIUM



**U.S. PREMIUM
LOWER LIMIT MEDIUM DENSITY
for trees of the genus *Pinus***



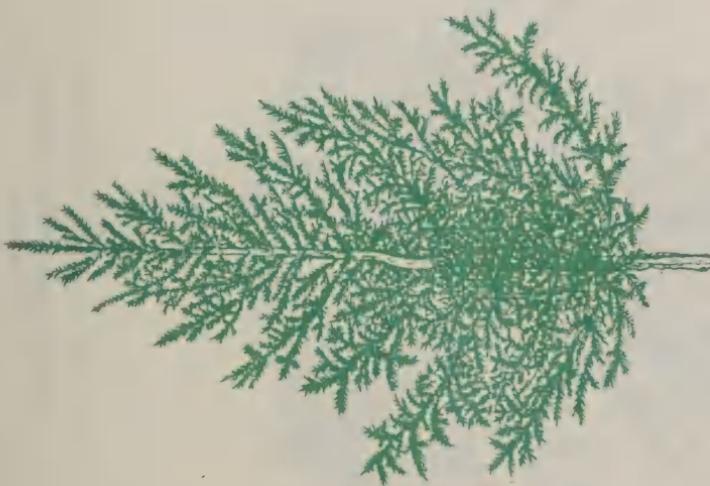
**U.S. PREMIUM
LOWER LIMIT MEDIUM DENSITY
for trees other than the genus *Pinus***



U.S. NO. 2 OR U.S. STANDARD
light density, too much space
between lower whorls



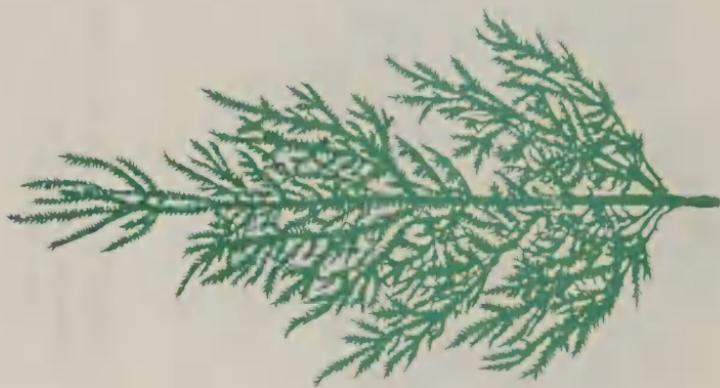
CULL
large hole, partial crows nest
uneven density



U.S. NO. 1 OR U.S. CHOICE
(UPPER LIMIT)
slight crook in stem



U.S. NO. 2 OR U.S. STANDARD
appearance damaged by crook in stem,
and incomplete whorl



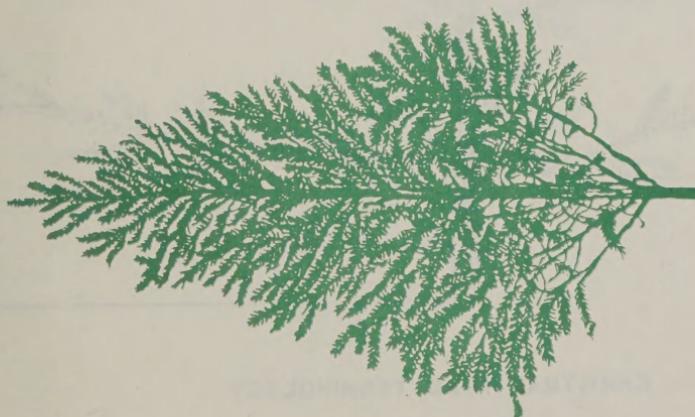
U.S. NO. 2 OR U.S. STANDARD

multiple leaders and
incomplete whorls

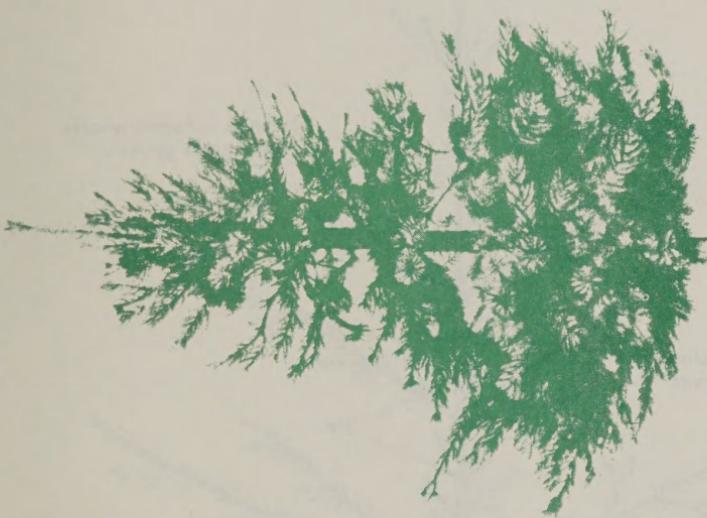


U.S. NO. 2 OR U.S. STANDARD

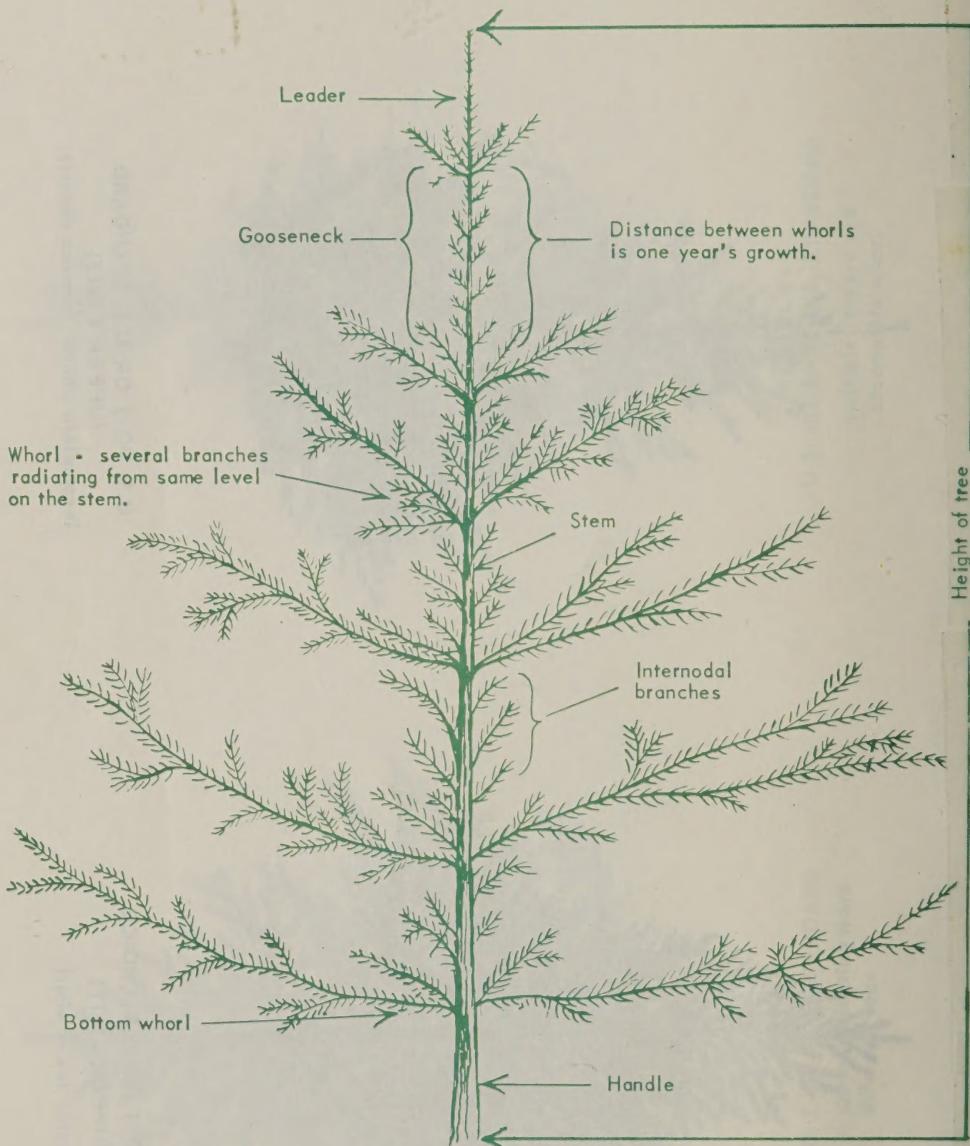
hole in crown, affecting more
than one face



U.S. NO. 1 OR U.S. CHOICE
(UPPER LIMIT)
barren lower whorl



U.S. NO. 2 OR U.S. STANDARD
(UPPER LIMIT)
incomplete whorls, uneven density



CHRISTMAS TREE TERMINOLOGY

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